



Testimony on HB 4714

Michigan Competitiveness Committee

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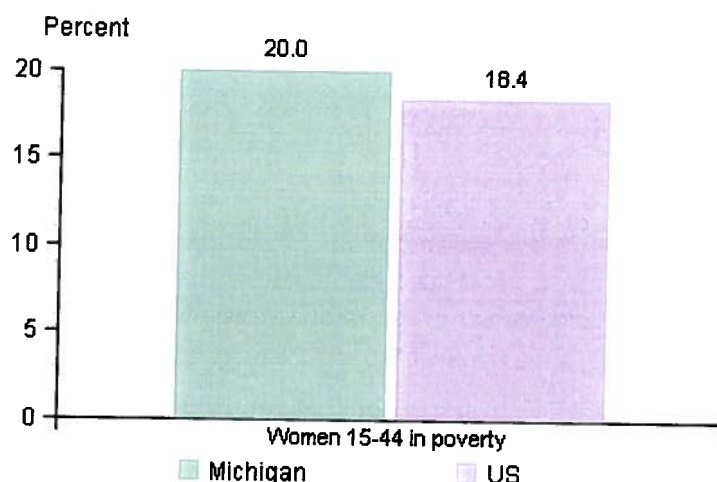
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Healthy women are more likely to have healthy babies. For that simple reason, the March of Dimes Michigan chapter urges our Legislature to take advantage of every opportunity to expand health care coverage in Michigan. HB 4714 is an important step in the right direction.

In our state, over 18% of childbearing age women were uninsured between 2009 and 2011. Studies have shown conclusively that uninsured people put off needed medical care, including both prevention and treatment for illness. Uninsured women of childbearing age miss critical opportunities to improve their health before and between pregnancies, which has the potential to improve both their and their babies' health. As a result, preventable or treatable health issues may grow into significant health problems with long-term consequences. About 159,000 uninsured women of childbearing age in our state would be eligible if Medicaid were expanded up to 133% of the federal poverty level.

Women 15-44 years below federal poverty level: Michigan and US, 2009-2011 Average



HB 4714 moves us towards the opportunity to extend health coverage and to promote healthy lifestyles for women before and between pregnancy. Such as access essential services like screening for high blood pressure and chronic conditions, tobacco cessation, weight loss programs to reduce the risk of gestational diabetes, substance abuse counseling, help in spacing pregnancies appropriately – all of which are demonstrated risk factors for poor pregnancy and birth outcomes such as preterm birth. These services would also benefit our state priorities of addressing obesity and infant mortality.

In addition, HB 4714 would begin to extend health coverage to parents, improves access to care, promoting healthy behavior, and a greater use of appropriate care for children. Children with health insurance whose parents are insured are less likely to have unmet health care needs compared to insured children with uninsured parents.

Although, March of Dimes Michigan Chapter does have concerns and questions about the bill as it is written. For example, the 48 month cap is inconsistent with the length of women's childbearing years. We look forward to working with you to improve this initial version of the bill. Michigan can make meaningful progress toward improving maternal and child health by expanding the Medicaid program to cover all low-income women.

For more information, please contact Kara Hamilton-McGraw at the March of Dimes, khamiltonmcgraw@marchofdimes.com or (248) 359-1577.